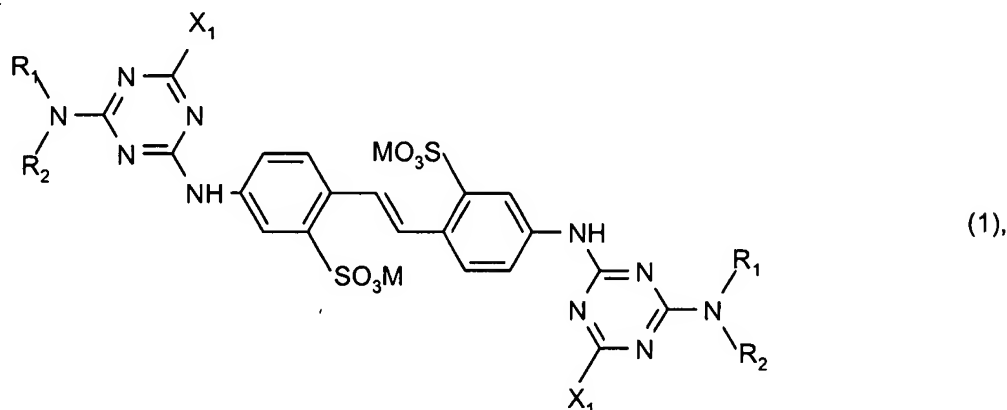


In the claims:

1. **(currently amended)** A whitening pigment comprising the reaction product of
- (a) a melamine-formaldehyde and/or a melamine-urea polycondensation product and
- (b) a water-soluble fluorescent whitening agent of the formula



wherein each of the two

R_1 group ~~[[s]]~~, independent of the other R_1 , ~~represents is~~ a C_1 - C_6 alkyl or C_1 - C_4 alkyl-O- C_1 - C_4 alkyl residue, which is substituted by one or two $-CONH_2$, $-CONHC_1$ - C_4 alkyl, $-COOH$, $-SO_2NH_2$, $-SO_2NHC_1$ - C_4 alkyl or $-NH_2$ groups, each of the two

R_2 group ~~[[s]]~~, independent of the other R_2 , ~~represents is~~ hydrogen, C_1 - C_4 alkyl, C_2 - C_4 hydroxyalkyl or C_1 - C_4 alkoxy- C_1 - C_4 alkyl, or

R_1 and R_2 together with the nitrogen atom complete a piperazine ring, each of the two

X_1 groups, independently, represent $-OH$, $-OC_1$ - C_4 alkyl, $-O$ aryl or the group $-NR_3R_4$, wherein R_3 and R_4 each, independently, represent hydrogen, C_1 - C_4 alkyl, C_2 - C_4 hydroxyalkyl,

C_1 - C_4 alkoxy- C_1 - C_4 alkyl, a phenyl, phenyl mono- or disulphonic acid residue or,

R_3 and R_4 , together with the nitrogen atom to which they are attached, complete a morpholino, piperidino or pyrrolidino ring or, alternatively,

X_1 represents an amino acid residue from which a hydrogen atom has been abstracted from the amino group and

M is hydrogen, an alkaline or alkaline earth metal ion, ammonium, mono- di-, tri- or tetra-substituted C_1 - C_4 alkylammonium or C_2 - C_4 hydroxyalkylammonium or mixtures thereof

wherein the reaction product has incorporated therein at least 16% by weight of component b.

2. **(original)** A whitening pigment according to claim 1, wherein the component (a) is a melamine-formaldehyde polycondensation product.
3. **(currently amended)** A whitening pigment according to claim 1, wherein, in the compound of formula (1), each of the two R_1 groups are the same, each of the two R_2 groups are the same, and each of the two X_1 groups are the same.
4. **(previously presented)** A whitening pigment according to claim 1, wherein, in the compound of formula (1),
 R_1 represents a C_1 - C_4 alkyl residue, which is substituted by one $-CONH_2$ or $-CONHC_1$ - C_4 alkyl group.
5. **(previously presented)** A whitening pigment according to claim 1, wherein, in the compound of formula (1),
 R_2 represents hydrogen, C_1 - C_4 alkyl or C_2 - C_4 hydroxyalkyl.
6. **(previously presented)** A whitening pigment according to claim 1, wherein, in the compound of formula (1),
 X_1 represents the group $-NR_3R_4$, wherein
 R_3 represents hydrogen, C_1 - C_4 alkyl, C_2 - C_4 hydroxyalkyl, C_1 - C_4 alkoxy C_1 - C_4 alkyl, a phenyl, phenyl mono- or disulphonic acid residue,
 R_4 represents hydrogen C_1 - C_4 alkyl or C_2 - C_4 hydroxyalkyl or,
 R_3 and R_4 , together with the nitrogen atom to which they are attached, complete a morpholino ring or, alternatively,
 X_1 represents an amino acid residue from which a nitrogen atom has been abstracted from the amino group.
7. **(previously presented)** A whitening pigment according to claim 1, wherein, in the compound of formula (1), M represents hydrogen, sodium or potassium.
8. **(previously presented)** A process for the preparation of whitening pigment according to claim 1, whereby a melamine-formaldehyde or melamine-urea polycondensation product is reacted with a fluorescent whitening agent of formula (1) in aqueous medium, in the presence of mineral acid, and subsequently treated with base.

9. **(previously presented)** A method for the fluorescent whitening of paper which comprises applying to paper an effective whitening amount of a whitening pigment according to claim 1.

10. **(original)** A paper coating composition comprising, in addition to 0.01 to 10 parts by weight of the according to claim 1, per 100 parts of inorganic pigment,

- (i) from 3 to 25 parts by weight of binder and co-binder,
- (ii) 0 to 1 part by weight of rheology modifier and
- (iii) 0 to 2 parts by weight of wet-strength agent.

11. **(previously presented)** A method for the fluorescent whitening of paper which comprises applying to paper an effective whitening amount of a paper coating composition according to claim 10.

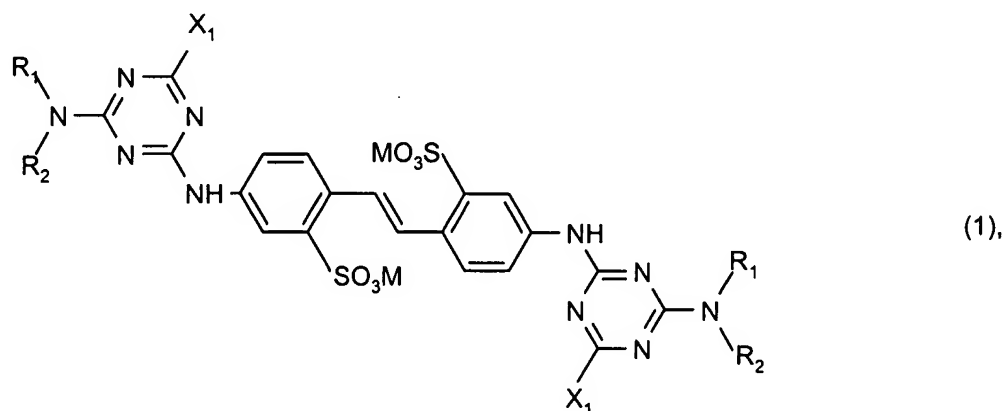
12. **(previously presented)** Paper which has been treated with a whitening pigment composition according to claim 1.

13. **(previously presented)** Paper which has been treated with a coating composition according to claim 10.

14. **(new)** A method for the fluorescent whitening of paper, which method comprises reacting in an aqueous media at a pH of 2 and at a temperature of between 50 and 90°C

(a) from 50 to 98% by weight, based on the combined weight of components a and b a melamine-formaldehyde and/or a melamine-urea polycondensation product and

(b) from 2 to 50% by weight, based on the combined weight of components a and b a water-soluble fluorescent whitening agent of the formula



wherein

each R_1 , independent of the other R_1 , is a C_1 - C_6 alkyl or C_1 - C_4 alkyl-O- C_1 - C_4 alkyl residue, which is substituted by one or two -CONH₂, -CONHC₁-C₄alkyl, -COOH, -SO₂NH₂, -SO₂NHC₁-C₄alkyl or -NH₂ groups,

each R_2 , independent of the other R_2 , is hydrogen, C_1 - C_4 alkyl, C_2 - C_4 hydroxyalkyl or C_1 - C_4 alkoxy C_1 - C_4 alkyl, or

R_1 and R_2 together with the nitrogen atom complete a piperazine ring, each of the two

X_1 groups, independently, represent -OH, -OC₁-C₄alkyl, -Oaryl or the group -NR₃R₄, wherein R_3 and R_4 each, independently, represent hydrogen, C_1 - C_4 alkyl, C_2 - C_4 hydroxyalkyl,

C_1 - C_4 alkoxy C_1 - C_4 alkyl, a phenyl, phenyl mono- or disulphonic acid residue or,

R_3 and R_4 , together with the nitrogen atom to which they are attached, complete a morpholino, piperidino or pyrrolidino ring or, alternatively,

X_1 represents an amino acid residue from which a hydrogen atom has been abstracted from the amino group and

M is hydrogen, an alkaline or alkaline earth metal ion, ammonium, mono- di-, tri- or tetra-substituted C_1 - C_4 alkylammonium or C_2 - C_4 hydroxyalkylammonium or mixtures thereof

to obtain a reaction product and applying an effective whitening amount of the reaction product to paper.

15. (new) A method according to claim 14, whereby a melamine-formaldehyde or melamine-urea polycondensation product is reacted with a fluorescent whitening agent of formula (1) in aqueous medium, in the presence of mineral acid, and subsequently treated with base.